Rep. Smith Testimony on Assembly Bill 622

I would first like to thank the Chair and Committee members for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 622, which relates to habitual truancy and open enrollment.

Wisconsin's Open Enrollment Program (OEP) provides families with options for their children's educational experience. Although a success, the program has put an increased burden on some school districts that are already facing financial strain.

Under current law, a school district may consider a number of factors when deciding whether or not to accept or reject a non-resident student application, including physical space in the school or program and some history of the student's disciplinary problems.

This bill does not change the current process for student's being admitted into a school district, but focuses on one factor for non-resident students continuing under the program.

This bill allows a school district, on a semester by semester basis, to factor habitual truancy into whether a student will continue to attend their school.

Many times, past instances of truancy have led a family to try a new school district in the hopes of finding success with a change of location. This bill does not prevent families from continuing to try new options for their children. However, if habitual truancy continues to be a problem, this allows the school district to factor it into their decision making process.

This bill does not have any effect on the current aid formula, and as is the case with any district's decision to reject a student's transfer under OEP, the parents and family of the student are permitted to appeal the decision to the Department of Public Instruction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I hope the Committee will act quickly on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Jeff Smith
State Representative
93rd Assembly District